

DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

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DECEMBER 1941

DOCUMENTARY—THE CREATIVE INTERPRETATION OF REALITY

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Home-made Nazi Propaganda

THE PREMATURE release of news of a great British victory in Libya, at a time when the real battle had scarcely begun, must rank as one of the major propaganda gaffes of the war. Whoever is responsible should be severely dealt with. It is an old Nazi trick to suggest that their forces are in difficulties so that the disillusionment following news of their later success may prove demoralising to the enemy. We are now apparently saving the Nazis the trouble of going to these lengths to deceive us.

Above the Battle

IN REPLY TO criticisms which have been published in the *Kinematograph Weekly*, of the inadequacy of the newsreels' contribution to the war effort, the Newsreel Association self-righteously affirms that the business of the newsreel "is not, and must never be allowed to be, that of propaganda." Does this mean that the newsreels, as their contribution to the war effort, propose to create a tradition of impartiality?

Films before Lunch

IT IS difficult to account for the hysterical praise accorded by certain sections of the Press to the Ealing production *Ships with Wings*. This is a film which on no conceivable basis of criticism can be accepted as anything better than a very ordinary little screen novelette with topical references. Yet one national daily, even in these days of paper shortage, can find room to serialise the story, whilst the editor of another suggests that high-ranking naval officers be released from their normal duties to speak in cinemas showing the film and so assist naval recruiting. Since the propaganda line of the film would be more appropriate to a Ruritanian campaign than to the Second World War one can only deduce that journalists are too easily flattered by supposedly exclusive tit-bits of advance information on forthcoming productions, and that the powers of film publicity men and their lunches have not been impaired by the war. It was a pity that the "Ark Royal" was allowed to become involved in what seems to be a pretty cheap business.

Films of this kind should not be made in war time. If drastic

official action should prove necessary to stop them this would not represent any significant interference with democratic liberty of expression.

Homer Nods Twice

PARAMOUNT BRITISH NEWS is to be congratulated upon taking such excellent advantage of Lord Beaverbrook's recent oratorical innovation when he invited questions from a meeting of Manchester munition-workers. Paramount devoted their whole issue to this single event with complete success. The spirit and spontaneities were caught in a fashion most unusual in newsreel. Both Lord Beaverbrook and Paramount are to be congratulated upon releasing the sections which showed the Minister of Supply at a loss for adequate answers to two questions which he might have guessed would be asked. It is interesting and important that the Prime Minister's right-hand man should be making such a regular and carefully calculated use of the film. However, the screen report of his Glasgow meeting, which followed similar lines to that in Manchester, raised a number of fundamental questions. Here again Lord Beaverbrook did not stand up well to questioning and this—allied to a tendency to invoke the name of Stalin over-frequently in what was clearly a calculated attempt to improve his relations with the working-class audience—helped to render the occasion somewhat negative from the standpoint of propaganda. The film is not an easy medium for the politician, and used unwisely it may do more harm than good.

Dead but Won't Lie Down

SOMETIMES IT seems as if the British Council finds the scripts for its new films amongst the burlesque descriptions of its earlier work which have from time to time been provided by caustic critics. Documentary News Letter has not been behindhand in describing the more extravagant *tours de force* of this "thatched cottage" school of British overseas propaganda, but we never in our fondest dreams imagined a film to publicise what Britain is fighting for which would both begin and end with cricket on the village green. Yet, here it is in the latest British Council batch like a nightmare come true.

Pickles at the B.B.C.

THE B.B.C. is a mountain which is frequently in labour to produce the most extraordinary mice. Following upon the anti-climax of the latest interval signal, we have Mr. Wilfred Pickles. He takes his place amongst those regular innovations which are always heralded by a spate of publicity and described as resulting from months of consideration and experiment. We were promised that Mr. Pickles was to be the first B.B.C. national announcer who would speak with a provincial accent, and general satisfaction was felt at the wisdom of making this partial break from the conventional B.B.C. voice. Mr. Pickles, however, proved to be embarrassingly like "Lord Haw Haw" speaking with an occasional short 'a'. The resemblance to the notorious Nazi announcer was remarkable not so much for the similarity in pronunciation as for an almost identical inflection and emotional gamut. The short 'a'—all that

remained of the provincial accent which we were promised—was merely an incongruous appendage to a strange hybrid voice. All this seemed, however, to be no fault of Mr. Pickles. One had the impression that he had been asked to play tricks with what otherwise might have been a pleasant enough delivery. Finally, this fact seems to have been recognised in official quarters and Mr. Pickles has lately become much more human. The final result may well be pleasant enough, but hardly of sufficient importance to warrant all the initial excitement.

No Hard Feelings?

A PARAGRAPH in last month's issue which referred to the suitability of studio personnel for the production of propaganda and instructional films appears to have given rise to misunderstanding in certain quarters. A correspondent, whose letter is printed in the current issue, has taken us to task for minimising the contribution which studio-workers have made to official British films. We have no doubt that regular readers of D.N.L. will understand that we are conscious of the value of the work which has been done by many studio technicians, and also by studio-trained personnel who have moved over into documentary production. The fact, however, that so many studio technicians of outstanding intelligence and imagination have left the studios to work with documentary units, appears to suggest that in the studios themselves there is a strong feeling that the milieu is not an ideal one for the production of propaganda. We spoke in our last article of the studio mind and we must stick to our point that the studio mind is not the propaganda mind. There can surely be no disputing the obvious fact that studio personnel are not trained to make propaganda; whereas documentary film production is and always has been directed towards propaganda objectives. Our generalisation of last month might perhaps have been more clearly worded, but our friends in the studios who are anxious to pull their weight in the war effort and who themselves are often the victims who suffer most from studio ideologies will, we believe, be foremost amongst our readers to appreciate the point we wished to make.

New Propaganda Film Front

AS WE GO to press Japan marches against the United States and Britain. We welcome our new American allies not only on the fighting front but on the front of propaganda. We may be sure that our colleagues in the American documentary movement will measure up to their new national responsibilities. We wish them well and promise them all the co-operation we can give.

Merry Christmas

WITH THIS issue Documentary News Letter completes the second year of its existence. We wish to thank our readers in every continent for their continued support and to assure them that though shortage of paper and printing-labour may handicap us, these problems show no sign of becoming insoluble. We wish our readers a Happy Christmas and a successful New Year and we send these greetings with special warmth to those documentary film-makers who are temporarily in uniform.

THE EMPIRE AND PROPAGANDA

"To found a great empire for the sole purpose of raising up a people of customers, may at first sight appear a project fit only for a nation of shopkeepers."

Adam Smith, Wealth of Nations.

"A NATION of shopkeepers." Adam Smith's phrase has echoed down the years, provided grist for the mill of hostile politicians and propagandists, and until recently has been the implicit thought behind the ordinary person's idea of the British Empire.

To feed our island race, with its population unbelievably swollen during the Industrial Revolution, the supplies of the world were and are undoubtedly essential, and in Victorian days the basic conception of the Empire was often that of a gigantic grocer's shop, the outside of which, however, was decorated with flags, idealistic slogans, and loudspeakers constantly referring to "the white man's burden."

Today that basic conception is still alive. British and foreigners alike have too narrow, too vague, a conception of what is the true meaning of the British Commonwealth of Nations.

Yet there was never a time so urgent for us to clarify our own conceptions of Empire and to project our Imperial theme across the world.

It is time to make Imperial Propaganda a weapon of Imperial Strategy.

We must articulate the Empire to ourselves. We must encourage all plans for interchange of information amongst the various parts of the Empire. We must present to the whole world a picture of what the Empire is and what it involves.

1. The Empire and Ourselves

There are many misconceptions to be cleared up, but the most vital is the distinction between the Dominions and the Colonies. It is almost unbelievable that this distinction is not instinctive; but it is not, and this fact must be recorded as one of the major failures of our system of public education.

Our propaganda and educational machinery should quickly be turned to making clear this essential distinction. (a) The Colonies, largely inhabited by "backward" races ruled completely by us under the official principle of Trusteeship—i.e. benevolent rulership until the developments arising from improved education and social conditions enable them to become self-governing, (b) the Dominions, largely new areas of the world colonised from Europe, completely independent, with their own Governments, laws and electoral systems; (c) India, Burma and Ceylon, where the issue of independence (i.e. Dominion status) is one of the major problems faced by Great Britain today.

2. The Inter-Imperial Set-up

Colonially speaking this is a matter of intensified education on the broadest lines—vivid and simple for the more primitive

peoples (e.g. Africa), broadminded and comprehensive as regards specialised knowledge (e.g. the already successful Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture in Trinidad).

As far as the Dominions are concerned, it is of course the business of each one to decide for itself what action to take as regards its own public relations. The forthright and widely conceived action taken by Canada is, however, profoundly significant.

Great Britain herself, however, has her own decision to take. Surely this is the time to suggest to the Dominions an intensification of the ideas which lay behind the Imperial Relations Trust (a body which alas! decided to curtail its functions during wartime). An inter-Imperial centre is needed to co-ordinate and canalise all the individual efforts of the Dominions. Administered by a fully representative council (and not necessarily housed in London) such a body would be a powerful factor in Imperial politics. It would of course include representatives from India and Burma.

3. The Empire and the World

It is not enough to say that Goebbel's dicta about the impending collapse of the Empire have been sufficiently answered by the rallying of the Dominions to the common cause; or by the fact that it was in a colony, only a few months earlier rent with labour troubles, that the idea of the Spitfire Fund first began. Let us not forget the Indian problem (specially significant as regards public opinion in the U.S.A.); or the narrowness of the majority by which South Africa entered (and remains in) the war; or the fact that Eire remains neutral.

We must present the world with a practical instead of a sentimental picture of the Imperial Scheme. We must reveal Great Britain as realising that she is, in fact, one nation in a commonwealth of nations. We must make crystal clear the fact that Canada, say, or Australia or New Zealand, are indeed new nations, needing as did the U.S.A., new and vigorous stock from the peoples of the old world, be they British, French, German, Italian, Ukrainian, Poles, Finns, Doukobhors, Dutch or what have you, to breed new characteristics and to build new forms of civilisation.

Only by such a realisation can we present to the world a true picture of the Commonwealth.

Britain is still an integral part of the Empire. But she is no longer necessarily the focal centre of it.

Let us be bold enough to face up to this idea and thus present to the world a conception of free nations fighting in a common cause, a conception which places the action of a Dominion on a level with the action of China or Russia or the United States. On this basis we can place the inner ties of mutual loyalty and sentiment in a truer and less artificial perspective.

4. Canada's Example

From Ottawa recently have come a group of films which admirably indicate the right approach. Produced by the National Film Board, with John Grierson and Stuart Legg in charge, they are geared to a conception of Imperial strategy in relation to the war which is exact and vital. They talk in international terms, in terms of raw materials and of armaments on the one hand and in terms of peoples at war on the other. They are based on hard thinking and new thinking, and they

represent one facet of those new conceptions which it is the duty of all true fighters to forge out of this war. The films are made to a policy.

We hope that the M.O.I., which is understood to be planning a series of films on the Empire, will find a policy too.

But whatever it does it must essentially intend the forging of a new Imperial ideal—an ideal in which Adam Smith's phrase will be as dead as is the bow and arrow in this second world war.

UNARMED COMBAT

IN A PHASE of the war when the military arm is active the propaganda arm tends to be eclipsed. There is a natural temptation to call for more tanks and less talk: to believe that the sword is immeasurably mightier than the pen. There is, in short, a tendency to belittle the importance of propaganda.

This retreat from reason represents a perilous circumscribing of national vision. For propaganda is often the means by which successful military action is achieved. And this is true, not only within the long terms in which wars are won and lost, but also within the short span of individual campaigns. It is generally recognised that propaganda decides the final result of modern warfare, because wars, in the ultimate analysis, are between ideas and not between tanks; but propaganda may also prove decisive in a single campaign. Campaigns are not machine-made, but man-made, and the men who devise them (far from the field of battle) may be supported or destroyed by propaganda. For ultimate British victory there can be no doubt that it will be necessary to destroy the power of many of our devisers of campaigns. Listen to Sir Roger Keyes in the House of Commons on November 25th:

"Secret and swift decision, surprise and speedy action, are the essence of success in offensive war. They are brilliantly illustrated by our campaigns in Africa. But you will not get any of these when you are dependent for decisions and actions on the cumbrous machine in Whitehall, from which we have been suffering since the war started, and by which all offensive amphibious projects were strangled before birth or mangled after endless discussions in one committee or another.

"I have an unbounded faith in our ultimate victory, but victory will be delayed while, in Whitehall phraseology, 'every stone is turned and every avenue is explored' for imaginary dangers and difficulties to prevent action being taken, and the glorious vista of the great goal beyond is shrouded in a fog of indecision. The great leaders of the past—Drake, Napoleon, and Nelson—have always emphasised the value of time in war. Time is passing. So long as procrastination, the thief of time, remains the key-note of the war machine in Whitehall we shall continuously lose one opportunity after another."

Only by a propaganda appeal to the people can we remove the dead hand of the bureaucrats who haunt our legislature

like ghosts from the unshriven committees of a past age. We are not concerned with the rights and wrongs of the Keyes controversy, but it has revealed again the wider issue of obstructionism and fear which penetrates into every field of official activity. This represents today Britain's fundamental weakness. We are at a turning point in the development of our war strategy. Our military power is beginning to match that of the enemy and the vital factor will be the manner in which we employ it.

The principal function of our propaganda in this phase of the war must be to build, in the people of this country and the Empire, a spirit which will fight continuously and on every civil and military front for the future against the past. Where red-tape bars the way it must be cut; where regulations cunningly contrived by retreating traditionalists interfere with action they must be changed or ignored. We need the ruthlessness of the Commando not only in the operation of our war machine overseas but in its organisation at home. The healthy militant elements of the civil service must refuse any longer to play the game according to the old rules. To deal with the time-wasters, obstructionists, dillettantes and saboteurs on the home front we need the ruthlessness of civilian commandos, officered from the ranks of the people. It must be clearly understood that at this desperate stage of the struggle, privilege based on social, financial or commercial considerations can no longer be recognised.

Our propaganda must become a creative force directed towards the building of an aggressive spirit of initiative and leadership in all fields of the war effort and on all levels of responsibility. Every citizen must be persuaded to put his shoulder to the dead-weight of national inertia; to be merciless with those who, consciously or unconsciously, from political or commercial motives, are still applying brakes to the war machine. There must be a new conception of the sacrifices which will be necessary both on the field of battle and on the home front if victory is to be won.

To aim at this propaganda objective is to build the opposite and the antidote to dictatorship. It is to create a dynamic force with its origins deep in the community. This has always been the principal long-term aim of documentary film-making. To-day we dare not allow that aim to remain long-term: it must become immediate. We have not only to defend democracy: we have to build it.

FILMS AND PROBLEM OF THE MONTH

By "RACK"

D. N. L. is glad to publish without editorial comment, these lively views of a well-informed writer on the relative merits of British, Russian and German film propaganda

A FUNNY sort of idea seems to have got round the place that German film propaganda is magnificent and effective stuff that puts our poor M.O.I. efforts in the shade; and from time to time various people with axes to grind, mainly people of extremely doubtful credentials and suspicious records, send up a widely publicised yelp about it, and demand that they be given the chance to make British propaganda just like the German. Recently these boyos found added ammunition in the appearance over here of Russian propaganda stuff, and they were quick to seize the opportunity of using it to denounce the M.O.I. Films Division. Now, nobody would deny for a moment that much of the Russian stuff is first-class (though to be truthful, quite a lot of it is just like the M.O.I. at its worst); at its best, such as the guerrillas being issued with rifles, it's the lively, invigorating sort of thing with the proper ideological kick that we've been shouting for for years. But it's a little too much to bear when the opportunist gentry use the Russian stick to beat the poor M.O.I. dog. At the moment they may find Russia the most handy, though unaccustomed, weapon; but there can be no doubt finally where their real admiration lies. It's the German propaganda, the German so-called efficiency, the German way of mobilising opinion that we're in the end urged to adopt and emulate.

Now it is very strange how this idea that Germany is good at propaganda has got around. To find it effective, I should say you must be either helpless, like the small neutrals, or distant, like the U.S.A., or guiltily conscious of the advantages Fascism offers the middle class, like our expectant amateurs. For to any ordinary working class audience German propaganda would be only a big joke, though they might get a laugh at some of the things said of our leaders. A lot has been made of the hundreds of cameramen who are supposed to go around with the German forces. To judge from the stuff they turn out, they're an amateur lot of incompetents. Very little of it bears the real front-line stamp on it and could just as well have been shot on manoeuvres (as no doubt it was) or back home with a few extras in battledress. Significant in this connection is the love German propaganda films have for showing big guns firing: this is natural enough when you remember that it's nice and safe back with the artillery. It looks as though all the Germans who were over here before the war ruining our film business, have piled back into Germany and are now hard at it ruining their own. Give our own lads a chance to get in some

action and our own newsreel or official cameramen a chance to go with them, and they'd lick the pants off the Germans. There's nothing in the German stuff, for instance, to equal the news reel shooting of the Channel convoy being shelled, to take the first example that comes to mind; and, of course, no German propaganda film has ever even attempted the deeper reference of some of our better propaganda.

Baptism of Fire is reputed to have scared some of the neutrals, but they must have been jumpy already. To judge from the extracts in *The Ramparts We Watch* and reports from neutral countries, it's as monotonous and dreary a piece as any old English quickie, the shooting would make our newsreelmen shudder. It is reported that a good few cameramen lost their lives in filming it: it must have been a brothel brawl or bad Polish vodka that was the end of them, for there does not seem to have been anything in the film where the cameraman was in the least danger. Admittedly some of the German stuff released over here since then seems to have been taken a bit nearer the front line, but even so the whole effect is dreary, childish and boring; you don't get the authentic lift of a new vision, only a glimpse of a dark and hopeless world, dark and hopeless for victors and vanquished alike. And technically speaking, much of the German stuff is scandalously bad—shot without tripods, panning the wrong way, or, for no reason at all, the cameraman's shadow, full in the picture. And the cutting, to judge from *Triumph of the Will*, seen here before the war, is the quota merchants' dream of heaven. All the shots are used and at such lengths and with such pompous music that only somebody under orders or a stickler for his money's worth could bear to sit through it.

And yet this is the sort of thing that we're urged to imitate! The latest batch of admonitions appeared early in November. Alan Moorehead, in a despatch to the *Daily Express* from Cairo, describes a showing of German and British propaganda films to a gathering of military and governmental bigshots there. He is full of praise for the German stuff, with its shots of dive-bombers spurting tracers, showers of bombs raining down and Liverpool by night blossoming into flame, and claims that it all makes war through German spectacles appear a great and glorious adventure for youth. The British stuff, troops receiving parcels and so on, certainly sounds pretty bad, but this open admiration for German propaganda is a little strange to say the least of it, this assumption that all that propaganda entails is to put on the screen successful activities of

the armed forces. Then, about the same time, our noble presslord Baron Kemsley saw fit to turn his *Daily Sketch*, a journal previously not exactly distinguished by long-term admiration for Russia (remember the Russo-Finnish war?) or denunciation of Hitler, into a platform from which to denounce the M.O.I. Films Division. For a scourge he snatched at the first handy weapon, which happened to be *Our Russian Allies* and must have come a little uncomfortably to his lordship's hand; but still any stick is good enough to beat a dog. This outburst was the signal for all the disappointed axe-grinders to join in the fun—with Michael Balcon of Ealing, Leslie Howard, and the Trade-press panting anxiously and hopefully in the rear.

Now, everybody has a right to have an axe to grind in this matter, and if the result is better film propaganda, nobody will complain; but they must expect us to look pretty carefully at their qualifications when they claim to be able to do film propaganda better than the Films Division. I won't waste words over Lord Kemsley or try to unravel his motives; his record speaks for itself, even if it has not before now been intimately bound up with films and propaganda. The Trade Press in general has repeatedly shown that it does not want propaganda (even of the most disguised sort) in cinemas at all, so its call to have propaganda turned over to the commercial film trade springs simply from the desire to see it disappear altogether, or see it limited to warlike backgrounds and the usual love story, which is all the film trade has contributed so far. Even the film trade's modest war effort of allotting the M.O.I. five minutes' screen time has been, and still is being, continuously and widely sabotaged, whatever disclaimers they may put out, by managers failing to show the films. And there's a good deal more to film propaganda than the film trade can hope to fathom: it's just not enough to shove your pair of lovers or comics into the Army, Navy or Air Force; the armed forces are only a part of what propaganda is about—a very small part at that. As for Leslie Howard, who has recently chimed in, his contributions to the propaganda effort were his appearances in *49th Parallel* and *Pimpernel Smith*, which weren't exactly inspiring, and, in the shorts line, an M.O.I. film, *From the Four Corners*, in which he conducts four Dominion soldiers over some of London's show places, and about which the less said the kinder. Which brings us to Michael Balcon of Ealing. Mr. Balcon has from time to time been very critical of the M.O.I.'s organisation of film propaganda and has submitted that his own and similar non-sponsored pictures have been more successful than Government stuff. Well, let's have a look at his record. Ealing produced the three "Dangerous Comment" shorts which, popular as they are said to have been, were well calculated to spread alarm and despondency. Then there was *Convoy* which for all Pen Tennyson's skill managed to give the impression that the main business of the Navy was resolving triangles involving officers' wives. Seamen, of course, are not allowed problems of

(Continued on page 227.)

SIGHT & SOUND

★

WINTER NUMBER

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(Continued from page 225.)

that sort. The worst five-minuter yet, *Food for Thought*, was made at Ealing Studios. Other shorts produced at Ealing were *Yellow Caesar*, a belated nose-thumbing at Mussolini 15 years after the British people had made up their own minds about him, and *Guests of Honour*, which showed the Free French, and so on, enjoying themselves over here. And now we have *Ships with Wings* which is supposed to be about the men of the Fleet Air Arm, but turns out to be more naval officers after more girls, the girls including, needless to say, the Admiral's daughter and a cabaret singer. So even from the point of view of putting the activities of our Armed Forces on the screen, which as I said is only one small part of propaganda, it would seem that Mr. Balcon is not exactly the man for the job. In fact I don't think that we can look to any of these busy critics for any improvement in the propaganda set up.

Which is not to say that it doesn't need improving—far from it. The Films Division has made great strides in improving the technical quality of its films and to a certain extent in widening their subject matter, but on a broad propaganda view their work must be considered a failure. The fault lies deeper than the quality of the personnel of the Films Division.

What gives the German propaganda films, and even more the Russian, the success they have achieved, in spite of their often shocking technical

qualities, is the fact that they are a part of, and an important part of, a real and vital national policy. It is this policy that gives them their driving force, even when it is such an old-fashioned and unpleasant policy as the German New Order and Imperialism. What our film propaganda needs is, not a reshuffling of people and policies, but to become the spearhead of a new and active idea. For far too long we've been on the defensive, mumbling in a querulously defeatist way about how good our social services are, and, as in *Britain at Bay*, how all we want is to be left alone in peace to enjoy our dividends. It's high time now that we took the offensive: we don't want to be left alone, on the contrary we're going to want a finger in every pie there is, even if it's as far away as China. We must make ourselves part of an active, offensive struggle, a struggle not with the negative, defensive aim simply of defeating a rival imperialism but with the aim of getting our own New Order started, a New Order whose dynamic will sweep the world as Christianity or Mohammedanism or Protestantism once did, and as we have just seen the crude force of Fascism sweep over the decadent relics of a dying system in Europe, only to crack in Russia against a superior dynamic. And once we get started ourselves on this New Order business, we needn't fear for our propaganda films: we already have the finest technicians; with a real policy to work to we'll beat the world.

contributed 50 per cent of subscriptions received between November 3rd to 16th. Arrangements are in hand for a Spring Session, commencing January, and Features will be selected from, amongst others, *Alexander Nevski*, *We from Kronstadt*, *The Circus*, *Le Puritain*, *Le Joueur d'Echecs*, *La Tendre Ennemie*, *Fall of a Tyrant*, *Innocence*, *Robber Symphony*.

THE Cambridge University Film Society reports: It is still a little too early to be able to reveal complete programme plans for the next University term, which starts in January, but among other things, it is hoped to present at least one show dealing with some aspect of the movies in a historical and systematic way.

The answers to some of the questions in a recent quiz circulated among members of the Society were interesting: for example, a surprisingly large percentage of members held that a feature film should be included in each programme. A fairly wide demand was shown for more talks on subjects connected with films: the Committee, guided by the poor attendance at most of last season's talks, had hitherto not arranged a further series. But as it now seems that a considerable number of members are interested, it is hoped to arrange more talks in Cambridge next term, and possibly one before the present term ends.

Scottish Churches Film Guild (Glasgow Branch) reports: The November meeting was held in Greyfriars Church and there was a good turn out of members. The picture under review was *Beyond Our Horizon*—a four-reel film of 1,600 feet by Religious Films Limited. It was thought that this was a very difficult subject to deal with on the screen but under the circumstances it was thought to be a very good picture. The next meeting of the Glasgow Branch of the Guild takes place on the 9th December.

Tyneside Film Society reports: During the second half of last season the membership was about 440 (unexpectedly low after the autumn total of 660) and, as this was below the economic limit for the type of exhibitions that had been held, the question of whether to run exhibitions this season had to be viewed with caution. Subscriptions were therefore invited on a provisional basis for a season of four exhibitions, to be held if sufficient support were forthcoming. The response ran to a gratifying total of over 600 subscribers, enabling the season to be launched, and the membership has now risen to over 750. For 14th December it is planned to have another French film, possibly *Le Bonheur*. The Society is governed by The Tyneside Film Association Ltd., a non-profit-making Company limited by guarantee: Chairman, B. S. Page, M.A.; Secretary, Miss V. Wilkinson, 1 St. Nicholas Buildings Newcastle-on-Tyne 1.

Dundee and St. Andrews, now in its seventh season, recently showed *Reka*, the first Czech film to be shown by the Society, and *Down Went McGinty* at the Scala Picture House, Dundee.

FILM SOCIETY NEWS

THE London Film Institute Society has arranged a season of French revivals to be held on Sunday afternoons, once a month, at the Institut Français, Queensberry Place, S.W.7. The first programme was held on October 19th when the season opened with *Quai des Brumes*, Len Lye's *When the Pie was Opened* and Cavalcanti's *Guests of Honour*. The second performance was held on November 16th and the programme included *Le Kermesse Heroique*, Geoffrey Bell's *Transfer of Skill* and Brunius' *Violons d'Ingres*. There will be six further film shows during the season and the films will be chosen from *Gens du Voyage*, *L'Etrange M. Victor*, *Les Rois du Sport*, *Hotel du Nord*, *Entree des Artistes*, *Trois de St. Cyr*, *Ignace*, *Crime et Châtiment*.

THE Belfast Film Institute Society opened its winter season with *La Marseillaise* which attracted a large audience to the Grosvenor Hall. A pleasant air of sociability enlivened the occasion and the Society was specially glad to welcome a large number of our French and Dutch allies. It was inevitable that at the present time special emphasis seemed to be given to the director's underlying idea of the essential continuity of history—indeed the film had a poignant topicality which made it hard to realise that it had been shot in the piping days of peace.

THE Stoke-on-Trent Secondary School Film Society is planning six shows during the present

season. A commencement was made on Monday, 27th October, with Hitchcock's *The Lady Vanishes*. The excellent new P.F.B. film *Hydraulics*, produced by Arthur Elton, and a P.F.B. *Cine-Magazine* completed the programme which was enthusiastically received. There has been an embarrassing increase in membership this season (some 300 students have paid their season subscription) and the Committee is faced with restricting membership or obtaining increased accommodation. The Society is sponsored by the Education Department of the local Co-operative Society whose sub-standard sound equipment is used. It is also indebted to the Director of Education for Stoke-on-Trent for placing a suitable room at its disposal. The five City Secondary Schools co-operate in forming the film society and a Committee of one teacher and one pupil from each school is elected annually. One wonders if there exist any other Film Societies modelled on similar lines.

THE Secretary of the Manchester and Salford Film Society writes: "The Film Societies of Manchester have taken an active part in Manchester's Anglo-Russian Week of Friendship, and have (indirectly) drawn the attention of many of its citizens to the work of the Film Society Movement. In contrast to our efforts, no Soviet Films were advertised for showing in Manchester Cinemas during the week. We collected £21 at our October 19th show, for the Russian Red Cross Fund; additionally we have

PAUL ROTH A PRODUCTIONS

January to December

1 9 4 1

"ALL THOSE IN FAVOUR?"

*3 reel non-theatrical
a study of local government in wartime rural Britain, made
specially for America*

BLOOD TRANSFUSION

*4 reel non-theatrical
the international story of transfusion with whole blood, plasma
and serum in Britain, Russia, Spain and America, for medical
audiences; a "popular" version is now in preparation.*

FIVE AND UNDER

*2 reel non-theatrical
an investigation of what happens to young children when
mothers are caught up in war work*

***A FEW OUNCES A DAY**

*5-minute theatrical
what the Battle of the Atlantic means in terms of shipping and
salvage told in animated diagrams*

†THEY MET IN LONDON

*1 reel non-theatrical
the scientists of free nations meet to discuss Science and World
Order at the British Association.*

THE BATTLE OF THE BOOKS

*5-minute theatrical
freedom of writing and reading in Britain and Nazi Germany
and the increase of reading in wartime.*

‡THE COUNTRYWOMEN

*2 reel non-theatrical
what the women of rural England are doing in war.*

THE CHILDREN SEE IT THRU

*1 reel non-theatrical
what happened to the children in the London blitz, made
specially for American showing.*

YOU'RE TELLING ME!

*5-minute theatrical
how a rumour starts, spreads and is scotched.*

DEFEAT DIPHTHERIA

*1 reel non-theatrical
how this disease can be stamped out by immunization.*

PRODUCTION STAFF

Donald Alexander Hans Nieter John Page Bladon Peake
Jack Chambers Yvonne Fletcher Budge Cooper Pamela Paulet
Peter Hennessy Ara Calder Marshall Joan Duff

WRITERS AND COMMENTATORS Ritchie Calder Beatrix
Lehmann Henry Ainley John Stagg Arthur Mann John Hilton

DIAGRAMS by Isotype Institute SCENARIO ADVISER Carl Mayer

MUSIC by Ernst Meyer and Charles Brill

*In association with
Science Films

†In association with British
Paramount News

‡In association with
Seven League Prods

26-27 D'ARBLAY STREET, LONDON, W.1. GERRARD 2826 & 3122

NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS

Men of Norway. *Production:* March of Time (No. 6, seventh year). *Distribution:* R.K.O. Radio Pictures. 18 minutes.

Subject. This issue of "March of Time" is devoted to the fight of the Norwegian people against the Nazi occupiers of their country. It is built up from actual shots taken in Norway combined most effectively with reconstructed scenes done elsewhere. The customary "March of Time" voice opens the film against shots of Norwegian boys arriving in Britain after crossing the North Sea in stolen boats. The story of the underground organisations in Norway itself is then told by a Norwegian. Almost everyone belongs to one of these undercover organisations. They publish illegal newspapers, organise sabotage, spy on German troop movements, and send vital information to Britain by means of secret short-wave transmitters. This sequence is the most stirring and exciting of the whole film.

Finally, another voice reviews the fighting forces of Free Norway here and abroad. In Britain the Norwegian Army is being rebuilt to act as the spearhead when the time comes to invade and clear the Nazis out. In service with the Royal Norwegian Navy are thousands of seafaring Norsemens who know every inch of the Norwegian coastline. There are fifty Norwegian men-of-war and seven hundred tankers and freighters which carry more than half of all the petrol and oil pouring into England. In Canada hundreds of young Norwegians are training in the Norwegian Air Force.

Treatment. An unusual feature is the use of more than one commentator. The film surveys the whole field and is packed with good, solid information.

Propaganda Value. It is a first-rate job of propaganda, heartening and inspiring, and deserving the widest possible distribution. It will be invaluable here and in America not only for the facts it gives but for the inspirational effect of seeing how a people with a traditional love of democracy second to none in the world, is battling ceaselessly for its freedom. May the day come very soon when they will have their chance to settle accounts with the Fascists—and their own miserable Quislings.

Give Us More Ships. *Production:* Merton Park Studios. For the National Savings Committee. *Subject.* National Savings.

Treatment. For five minutes Leslie Banks placed for some unknown reason in a wharfside setting, shouts at the top of his voice a piece of Gilbert Frankau. This alleged poem starts off like this:

Over the oceans perilous
I heard our sailors calling to us—
One clear call from the sea to the shore:
"We need more ships to win this war.
Speed them—we need them—down the slips,

Destroyers, and cruisers, and battleships,
Minesweepers, corvettes and submarines.
For these are the means—and the only means—
To keep white cliffs inviolate
From rapine and murder and Nazi hate.
No Hun shall land on a British shore
If you give us more ships to win this war."

There is a lot more in the same style with Leslie Banks working himself into a terrific lather for the peroration, Stock news-reel shots are cut in at odd moments to relieve the audience of the necessity of looking at Mr Banks all the time, but there is no getting away from that poem. I still wake up in the middle of the night screaming.

Propaganda Value. This just about sets a new all-time low, and someone will have to give the Savings people a kick in the pants for inflicting such rubbish on the public.

Sam Pepys Joins the Navy. *Production:* G.B. Screen Services for the National Savings Committee. *Producer and Director:* Francis Searle. *Camera:* Walter Harvey. 7 minutes.

Subject. A youngster, the namesake of the diarist Samuel Pepys, joins the Navy and is seen going through some stages of his training. Later, at the Admiralty, an officer notices the boy's name on a list and recalls the good service the earlier Pepys rendered to the Navy. A portrait of Pepys hangs in the room. From it steps the wraith of the old gentleman which talks to the officer about Naval money matters and particularly about the vast sums needed today.

Treatment. A number of good sequences in strict accord with reality are linked at the end of the film to a treatment employing light fantasy. Young Sam is a likeable character. The scenes of his enlistment and training are entertaining, but old Sam's wraith is a phoney. The standard of production is a high one.

Propaganda Value. This film makes a partly hokum appeal to people to lend money to fight the war. To see the clean-whittled men and lads of the Navy going efficiently and cheerily about their business is to feel admiration and confidence. In this respect the film is good propaganda.

Sailors with Wings. *Production:* March of Time (No. 7, seventh year). *Distribution:* R.K.O. Radio Pictures. 18 minutes.

Subject. This latest issue is devoted to the part played by American aviation in the Battle of the Atlantic. By utilising old negative from War Department vaults it traces the development of American aviation to the present day and builds up to a tremendous climax of aircraft carriers and gigantic planes on Atlantic manoeuvres.

Treatment. Great credit must go to the cameramen who have secured some magnificently photographed material of flight formations and power-diving bombers. The scenes on board modern aircraft carriers are fascinating and give

a tremendous impression of the size and clock-work efficiency of these ships. Sound effects are well above normal "March of Time" standard.

Propaganda Value. The sheer impressiveness of the ships afloat and in the skies shown here will do more good as a tonic than a thousand descriptive newspaper articles.

How to File. *Production:* Shell Film Unit. *Producer:* Edgar Anstey. *Direction:* Kay Mander. *Photography:* Sidney Beadle.

Subject. Instruction on how to use the file in metal working.

Treatment. The film is so contrived that it adequately emphasises the three important rules to be observed if good craftsmanship is to result. These three rules are: stand well; hold the file correctly; file in the right direction. There is additional information about setting up the job in the vice, types of files for particular purposes, checking the work by means of a straight edge and testing by means of a surface-plate. It is of particular interest to note the novel application of the trucking shot. This has been extensively employed as an element in the system of exposition. By means of it the ambiguities and misconceptions which are inherent in the mid-shot cum-close-up relationship have been avoided.

Instructional Value. This is high and prompts one to ask whether it is not possible for the technique to be extended to a number of the processes in which it is now so urgently necessary to instruct newcomers to the industrial front.

Our Russian Allies. Anglo-American Film Corporation. *Edited by:* Herbert Marshall. *Commentary:* J. B. Priestley, Major A. S. Hooper and Charles Garner.

Subject. This is the story of the people of the Soviet Union. A story that if shown in Britain five years ago might have changed history. It is tragic to think that if Beaverbrook and Churchill and the Labour Party chiefs and the Press had spoken then about the Soviet Union as they do today, there might have been no war and the peoples of Europe instead of slaughtering each other would be working together for something worth while.

Our Russian Allies will at least shock and startle the middle class who have been so often told that Russians are bearded monsters engaged chiefly in the occupation of mutual extermination that many of them have come to believe it.

The film covers a vast canvas, beginning with peace-time activities—physical training of the youth, sports, and joyous holiday celebrations in the Red Square. I have stood in the Red Square and seen these things myself. A million robust boys and girls marching proudly past—a score of different nationalities within the Union displaying their national dances—a gigantic manifestation of a free people conscious that the world is theirs—and theirs to enjoy.

But behind all this is the clear, certain knowledge that war is never far away, and the next sequence is devoted entirely to full scale manoeuvres of the Red Army. A complete battle between

(continued on page 234.)

DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

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stands for the use of film as a medium of propaganda and instruction in the interests of the people of Great Britain and the Empire and in the interests of common people all over the world.

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HOME PROPAGANDA

Comment by "Timespan" on a report prepared by Mass-Observation for the Advertising Service Guild and published under the title "Change, No. 2 Bulletin of the Advertising Service Guild."

THE eighty odd pages of this book are packed with information about our Home propaganda during the period September, 1939, to September, 1941. Eighty pages are far too few for the record of so extensive an activity and, therefore, the contents are little more than notes of the more significant findings from the field of factual observation. Because of this limitation, the reader is inadequately provided with the data necessary for testing the conclusions which the author draws. From this it should not be inferred that the conclusions are questionable, but merely that they are not fully established within the compass of the report.

Even so, Tom Harrison and the Advertising Service Guild have done yeoman service in recording the relative failure of much of our home propaganda. Lack of precision and waste over large areas of operation are disclosed. The twenty-two major conclusions arrived at are constructively intended and should be accorded urgent and serious attention by all propagandists.

The report covers home propaganda activity by means of press, radio, films, posters, leaflets, booklets, books, lectures, meetings, demonstrations and exhibitions. Readers of D.N.L. will be particularly interested in radio and films. Here are some abstracts from the relevant sections of the report:

Radio

"The radio is at present the most trusted of British sources of information, and thus indirectly of much official propaganda. The most potent and immediate method of influencing fifteen million or so Britishers at once is over the radio at nine o'clock in the evening.

"The most popular and most listened-to types of programme are variety, dance music and theatre organ. These three types continually have items, songs or scenes or jokes, which in effect (though not in intention) contradict Ministerial and official warnings and appeals. For instance, during September, 1941, while the public was officially warned over the radio against lull psychology, complacency, over-confidence, the whole tone and tempo of popular songs and jokes broadcast was increasingly stimulating and developing lull psychology, complacency, over-confidence.

Short films

"Studies during 1940 showed shorts having a much higher degree of popularity and response among middle-class people than among some working-class people. This derived largely from the strictly upper and middle-class attitude of many of the films, starting with the original "Careless Talk" films, in each of which the spy was a worker.

"During 1941 this unsympathetic element in

short films was greatly reduced, perhaps largely because the blitz made the working man and housewife the admired figure, the romantic hero, who could no longer be described even as a fool, certainly not a villain. The steady weekly showing of shorts built up a prestige for them, a short habit. This prestige would be greater were it not for the fact that many cinema managers do not always show the films. The high popularity in 1941 was especially strong in upper and middle-classes. A second survey concentrated among these groups was made through Mass-Observation's panel of voluntary observers in July, 1941. This survey is not representative of the nation as a whole, and the interest lies in the comparison of the opinions of the same people about general official propaganda through press and posters, as compared with their opinion of official films. It will be seen that the comparison is strongly favourable to the shorts, which three people like for every one who criticises them, whereas government advertising is disliked by considerably more than like it.

Opinion	Percentage expressing this opinion about:	
	Government Advertising	M.O.I. Films
Very good	3	4
Good	18	25
Mixed to Fair	23	17
Bad	22	8
Very bad	8	2
Seldom notice any (for films; leave little im- pression; forget) ..	18	7
Not seen any; don't go to cinema	—	31
No opinion: unclassi- fied)	8	6

"There is a greater demand for a documentary and realistic treatment than had been supposed by documentary producers, who tend to think of a mass public as insufficiently intelligent to take in the traditional simplicity and directness of documentary technique. In fact, pre-war researches show a large public demand for more films of everyday life and realistic matters, even as full-length features, so long as they reflect the situation *without the bias of intellectual and better-off condescension* about less educated people, a bias which has reduced the mass potential of much documentary. When seventeen official short films were classified according to their treatment of subject into "short stories" and "strict documentaries", and the observed audience response of these two main types compared, there was a significantly higher degree of response to the documentary type. Approximately one-eighth of response to the docu-

mentary type was unfavourable, whereas rather under a half of the response to the story type was unfavourable. These results should in no way be taken as conclusive; they are nevertheless worth serious attention. Undoubtedly, some of the shorts which have used actors have been the least successful, and some of those which have used entirely genuine people, without any acting, have been most successful, particularly among the working-class audiences who form the great part of cinemagoers. The short five-minute official film is not related to any public preference for the five-minute film, and of course imposes severe limitations on the propagandist.

"So far only slight official use has been made of long films, cartoons, etc. The recent *49th Parallel* has shown the impact value of an intelligently and realistically handled full-length feature."

The following significant comment is abstracted from the section on "Entertainment and Cultural Activities:

"Among the hundreds of people on the Ministry of Information staff, not one is responsible for music, not one for novels. Yet music, and especially dance music, is one of the major mass influences of our time, and beside it a channel like the leaflet is often comparatively insignificant.

"While Ministers and official campaigns are urging us all to avoid a lull psychology, the enormously potent medium of dance music working through millions of radio sets and gramophones, thousands of dance halls, music halls, concert parties and pubs, lulls people, with current songs of which the titles alone are sufficient indication:

"Down Forget-me-not Lane",

"No. 10 Lullaby Lane",

"The Road that Leads to Home",

"It doesn't mean a thing",

"What do we care",

"You don't have to tell me, I know".

"No one would suggest dance music should all become serious, or that people should not have any fun and just go round brooding and whistling over the war. But things can go to the other extreme too. It is reasonable to suggest that there should be some official awareness of those very large and influential areas of mass propaganda which are at present apparently regarded as nothing to do with the war story."

The report is at its best when it keeps to the factual, makes fair comment or proceeds by way of simple inference. It is at its weakest when it speaks in generalities or attempts generalisations. For instance:

"When we are at war the only consideration is winning the war, provided the winning of it does not destroy all prospects of post-war human decency. Therefore, the only yardstick for measuring a propaganda campaign is not its moral worth, but its effect. In the same way, one cannot attach the formal standards of peacetime morality to our air-raids on Berlin or to the guns firing shells across the Channel.

Certain parts of the moral code have to stand suspended in wartime; if this is accepted, as it must be by every one except the conscientious objector, then the only consideration for official propaganda becomes its *successful* influencing of those sections of the public mind required to take the action or make the intellectual preparation officially desired."

This sounds rather like a plea for propaganda to be an "all in—nothing barred" affair. Surely the deeper truth of the matter is this: although certain parts of the moral code may stand suspended, moral law continues in operation. The moral law involved in propaganda is *Means Condition Ends*. Also it may be asked, which is the moral code, parts of which stand suspended in war-time?

For most of us this is a war fought to preserve the true and valid in the human inheritance. It is a war fought for the sanities and decencies and for the pregnant fullness of life. There is no need whatsoever to lie to us or lie to our friends, and there is no need for the specious in our propaganda.

Another interesting consequence of careless generalisation may be observed. Propaganda is defined as the "language of leadership" (p. 5). By transposing the definition of propaganda for the word "propaganda" in qualifying clause 1 on page 1, we arrive at the following statement:

"It is a field report. That is to say, it is concerned with observed reactions (or non-reactions) of the people at whom the 'language of leadership' is apparently aimed. We say apparently—and this is an important point—because it is not always enough for the 'language of leadership' to reveal its precise objective in order to achieve it: *the two may even be opposed.*"

As far as I am personally concerned if there are leaders with some sort of a language of their own, my advice to them is, "Say what you mean"—"Speak the truth and shame the devil, my pretty ones." And this goes for Malet Street as well as the Cabinet.

The report includes a table showing £2,568,800 expenditure of various departments on press and poster advertising campaigns from September, 1939, to May, 1941. It is interesting to note that whereas £834,100 was spent by the National Savings Committee, £41,600 is the figure appearing opposite Health, and £700 opposite Education. It is claimed that saturation point is being reached in "official appeal impact" and that "it is in danger of defeating itself." The £42,300 expended on health and education campaigns is hardly to be held responsible for this state of affairs.

The main lesson to be drawn from the report, according to Mass-Observation, is this:

"If the State thus controls us in peacetime, we expect much more from it in war—a war which, we have been constantly assured, means everything to our future existence as a nation and as individuals. The State, in its propaganda, is trying to have it both ways. By emphasising the dangers of this war, it transfers the onus of action by *pleading* for action when for one reason or another it is unable

to compel. But the very emphasis on the danger is one of the keys to the lack of success.

"If the danger is as real and as great as all that, we wouldn't (ordinary people think) be asked.

"Yet official propaganda reaches out to the vitals of life. It seeks to disturb, not a little thing like say "Lifebuoy" instead of "Pears", but the very roots of our home lives and relationships. These must be weighed against Patriotism. The acuteness of the danger will be weighed against the State's own standards of importance.

"Official propagandists tend to forget the fundamental weakness of the *pleading* position in those who are expected to be in a *leading* position. They forget the depth and strength of the roots they are attempting to disturb. Pleading is not the only alternative to compulsion. It isn't the next logical step. There's no need to plead with a man to get out of the way of a 'bus—if you can *convince* him that there really is a bus and that he's in the way of it. The keyword is *convince*.

NEWS FROM U.S.A.

THE establishment of a section on films in health education and medicine at the American Film Centre was announced recently by Donald Slesinger, Director of the Centre, at its office, 45 Rockefeller Plaza, New York City. Adolf Nichtenhauser, M.D., is in charge of the section. The new section will be a clearing house and information centre on the use and production of health education and medical films.

Through this section the American Film Centre will evaluate existing health films in collaboration with health experts and publish from time to time lists of recommended films. Co-operation with the many groups using health films will be sought in order to create a solid economic basis for their production. A long-range production programme will be developed in collaboration with competent agencies.

Attention will also be paid to the technical medical film, especially with regard to its use in medical schools. From its beginning the American Film Centre has co-operated with medical and scientific agencies, such as the Wistar Institute of Anatomy and Biology in Philadelphia, and various hospitals in New York and New England, in the study and production of films.

Dr. Nichtenhauser has been working in educational cinematography for many years. Before joining the Centre he was on the staff of the National Tuberculosis Association and of the New York Tuberculosis and Health Association, where he worked on health films. His production associate, Ensign Warren Sturgis, is on leave with the Naval Medical School. The section on Health and Medical Films has received a three-year grant from the Rockefeller Foundation.

SHORT FILM BOOKINGS FOR DECEMBER—JANUARY

The following bookings for December and January are selected from a list covering its Members, supplied by The News and Specialised Theatres Association

	Week commencing
Alive in the Deep	
The Tatler Newsreel Theatre, Newcastle on T.	Dec. 14th
The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	28th
Tatler News Theatre, Birmingham	Jan. 11th
The News Theatre, Bristol	11th
Alive, Alive-O	
The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	Dec. 14th
American Spoken Here	
The Tatler Theatre, Chester	Jan. 14th
Baggage Buster	
The Tatler Theatre, Leeds	Dec. 28th
Beautiful British Columbia	
The News Theatre, Bristol	14th
The Cosmo Cinema, Glasgow	22nd
Crime Control	
The News Theatre, Leeds	Jan. 11th
The Tatler Theatre, Birmingham	11th
The Cosmo Cinema, Glasgow	12th
Daghestan	
The News Theatre, Leeds	Dec. 14th
Dances of the People of the U.S.S.R.	
The News Theatre, Nottingham	14th
Father of the Family	
Victoria Station News Theatre	25th
Filming the Fleet	
The News Theatre, Leeds	21st
Fire Chief	
The Tatler, Liverpool	15th
Fools Who Made History, No. 1	
The News Theatre, Leeds	14th
Follow the Sun	
World's News Theatre, Praed Street	25th
From Singapore to Hong Kong	
The News Theatre, Bristol	Jan. 11th
Going Places, No. 90	
Tatler Newsreel Theatre, Newcastle on Tyne	Dec. 28th
Going Places, No. 91	
Eros, Piccadilly	15th
Green Girdle	
The News Theatre, Leeds	14th
The News Theatre, Birmingham	14th
The News Theatre, Newcastle on Tyne	21st
Eros, Piccadilly	22nd
Guests of Honour	
The Tatler Theatre, Chester	21st
The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	28th
Jockey's Day	
The Tatler News Theatre, Birmingham	14th
The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	Dec. 21st
Let's Wander	
The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	Jan. 4th
Little Lion Hunter	
The Tatler Theatre, Liverpool	Dec. 22nd
Man made Island	
The Tatler News Theatre, Birmingham	14th
March of Time, No. 5, 7th year	
The Cosmo Cinema, Glasgow	15th
The News Theatre, Newcastle on Tyne	14th
The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	14th
The News Theatre, Nottingham	28th
March of Time, No. 6, 7th year	
The News Theatre, Newcastle on Tyne	Jan. 11th
The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	11th
The Cosmo Cinema, Glasgow	12th
Meet the Stars, No. 2	
The Tatler Theatre, Leeds	Dec. 21st
Merseyside	
The News Theatre, Leeds	28th
The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	28th
Modern New Orleans	
Victoria Station News Theatre	15th
Moscow	
The News Theatre, Newcastle on Tyne	14th

Motor Maniacs	
The News Theatre, Leeds	Dec. 28th
New York Parade	
World's News Theatre, Praed Street	29th
The News Theatre, Manchester	Jan. 4th
Our First Strength	
The News Theatre, Bristol	Dec. 14th
Over the Seven Seas	
The News Theatre, Nottingham	Jan. 11th
Palace of Wonders	
The News Theatre, Nottingham	Dec. 28th
Pleasure Bound in Canada	
The Cosmo Cinema, Glasgow	Jan. 5th
Piano Prodigies	
The News Theatre, Nottingham	11th
Picturesque Poland	
Eros, Piccadilly	Dec. 18th
World's News Theatre, Praed Street	29th
Priestley's Postscript	
The News Theatre, Leeds	21st
The Tatler Newsreel Theatre, Newcastle on Tyne	Jan. 4th
Publicity Sports	
The News Theatre, Manchester	4th
The News Theatre, Birmingham	4th
Puppet Love	
The Tatler Newsreel Theatre, Newcastle on T.	Dec. 21st
Queen Cotton	
The News Theatre, Leeds	28th
Rolling Rhythm	
The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	Jan. 4th
Savoy in the Alps	
The Tatler Theatre, Liverpool	Dec. 8th
Sojourn in Havana	
The News Theatre, Bristol	Jan. 4th
Soviet Sport	
The News Theatre, Nottingham	Dec. 21st
Speaking of Animals	
The Cosmo Cinema, Glasgow	22nd
Stranger than Fiction	
The Tatler News Theatre, Birmingham	Jan. 4th
Story of Michael Flaherty	
The Tatler Theatre, Liverpool	Dec. 15th
Take it or Leave it	
The News Theatre, Manchester	Jan. 11th
Take it or Leave it, No. 3	
The Tatler Theatre, Chester	Dec. 28th
Take it or Leave it, No. 4	
The News Theatre, Leeds	21st
The Gun	
The Tatler Theatre, Chester	14th
The News Theatre, Leeds	14th
The Seeing Eye	
The News Theatre, Leeds	Jan. 11th
The World in Action, No. 1	
The Tatler Theatre, Chester	4th
This Place Australia	
The News Theatre, Leeds	11th
Unholy War	
The News Theatre, Nottingham	Dec. 14th
Violin Virtuoso	
The News Theatre, Nottingham	Jan. 4th
Waiting for Baby	
The Tatler Theatre, Chester	Dec. 21st
The News Theatre, Leeds	28th
Washington Parade, No. 14	
Eros, Piccadilly	25th
What's Your I.Q. No. 2	
The News Theatre, Leeds	28th
White Eagle	
The News Theatre, Newcastle on Tyne	28th
Western Wonderland	
The Premier News Theatre, Bournemouth	14th
Western Waterways	
World's News Theatre, Praed Street	15th

FEATURE FILM REVIVALS

	Week commencing
City Streets	
The Classic, Southampton	Dec. 11th
Desire	
The Classic, Croydon	21st
Earl of Chicago	
The Classic, Croydon	14th
Free to Live	
The Classic, Baker Street, W.1	18th
Freedom Radio	
The Embassy, Notting Hill Gate	28th
Gaslight	
The Classic, Baker Street, W.1	14th
The Classic, Croydon	18th
The Classic, Tooting	21st
Goodbye, Mr. Chips	
The Classic, Croydon	28th
Gunga Din	
The Classic, Hendon	Jan. 1st
Knight Without Armour	
The Tatler Theatre, Leeds	Dec. 14th
Lady in Question	
The Classic, Croydon	11th
The Classic, Tooting	18th
The Classic, Baker Street, W.1	21st
Les Misérables	
The Tatler Theatre, Leeds	Jan. 4th
Marie Antoinette	
The Classic, Hendon	Dec. 14th
Typhoon	
The Classic, Portsmouth	14th
Wizard of Oz	
The Classic, Southampton	25th
The Classic, Baker Street, W.1	25th
The Classic, Croydon	25th
The Classic, Hendon	25th
The Classic, Portsmouth	25th
You Can't Take it With You	
The Embassy, Notting Hill Gate	18th

DISNEY TRAINING FILMS

Reproduced by courtesy of Film News.

The Canadian Government has commissioned the Walt Disney studios to produce animated films for training purposes, it was revealed recently.

Production has already started on five short films, half of the footage being devoted to a technical military subject—the operation of a new anti-blitzkrieg weapon. Arrangements for the enlistment of the Disney studios in Canadian training plans were made by John Grierson, chief of the National Film Board.

Grierson's attention was directed to the use of Disney films for training purposes through the studio's recent offer to make training films at cost for the United States Government. Disney's offer was accompanied by a sample picture, teaching aircraft riveting. The riveting film has been shown to government officials in Washington, and many government agencies have expressed interest.

SELWYN FILMS

Makers of Films for
The British Council and
The Ministry of
Information

Managing Director:
C. A. RADLEY

Director of Productions:
DESMOND DICKINSON

Film Director:
DAVID MacKANE

Chief Cameraman:
D. P. COOPER

Wes. 4969

Studios: RIVERSIDE STUDIOS, HAMMERSMITH

AN ALLIED FILM UNIT

By JIRI WEISS,

the well-known Czech documentary director who is now working in this country.

AS THE world settles to the greatest battle of all time, there is a chance to break the barriers which until now have stood between the peoples of Europe and forced them one by one into submission. The obstacles, and those who wished them and profited by them, have been smashed or exposed; moreover, many of the very interests which promoted isolationist feeling and tendencies in various countries, and opposed international collaboration, have been forced to change their mind; they now know that together we stand or together we perish.

Never in their history have the British been so much cut off from Europe as they are now; yet there was probably never less isolationist feeling in their hearts. The feeling of solidarity with other peoples is growing continuously. Even more is it growing in those lands which have been betrayed or conquered.

Like all mass feelings, this growing understanding of the fact of mutual dependence of all nations is essentially instinctive and vague. There is a danger that it may be forgotten once Nazism is defeated. Now is the moment to prepare the basis for maybe a better world. Human beings have been stirred as they can be stirred only by great crises or wars. The reality which people feel only vaguely must be interpreted clearly and understandably, as creatively as only film can do it—by documentary means.

British documentary film makers have given this country the best war films in the world. Technically extremely skilful, they have touched every subject with a breath of human feeling; they have introduced on the screen their people as the hero. We have seen in their films the real face of Britain: the miner, the seaman, the worker. We have seen people in shelters, the social services, the men and women in the Forces. We have had on the screen an exposition of the giant war-machine, that could not have been done better.

DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER does well in asking for a film on "Strategy," in asking for more films with a wider scope. But still, this is not enough. It is not enough to show on the screen the face of the man in the street or the man behind the lathe and for this man always to be a member of the same single country. Reality, as the documentary film desires to interpret it, is a vast and complex pattern where the destinies of human beings and nations are inextricably bound up in a common destiny. It is not sufficient to show the man in the street in Britain: *you must show the man in the street in Paris, in Prague, in Moscow, in Calcutta.* Documentary analysis must be extended to peoples of the world. The average Briton (and therefore, much more, the Neutral) is fed of course day by day with "Allied" propaganda. But what does he know of the content of this word or of its significance?

The British Government which prepared the haven for so many refugee Governments in this country must have considered this step as one of great political significance; otherwise the whole thing is just a giant tragi-comic farce. The Government of Britain, by doing what it did, wanted to express its solidarity with the conquered peoples, and also it desired to indicate that it stands for the re-erection of the *status quo ante* 1938 (Munich), therefore, the stress on the world *Allied*.

But how are the "Allies" presented on the screen to the British public? What do they hear and see of them? The Greeks are represented by King George; the Poles by General Sikorski; the Czechs by Benes; the French by de Gaulle; then there is Queen Wilhelmina with her daughter and her baby . . . and besides other notables there are rows of soldiers, flags, drums, tanks *ad infinitum*. But where are the peoples? It is important to acquaint the public with notable politicians, but it is much more important to tell them something about the 15, 30 or 40 million compatriots who stand side by side with them—not in security in the clubs of this island, but over there, at home, facing the terror of the enemy. It is they, and not the handful of politicians over here, with whom an understanding must be found. And it is they who will decide the fate of Europe. The British people, who for so long have lived in a splendid isolation on their island, must know more about their real allies. Then there are the allied armies here; a sea of faces, fates, adventures. Their uniforms, flags and tanks are similar to those of the British. But what stories there are about them! If DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER calls for enlarging the scope of the documentary, which has proved itself so useful a weapon in fighting Fascism, why not enlarge not only its technical, but also its ideological scope?

In the absence of any common platform on which all could come together let us turn at once to the Atlantic Charter. This important document has been subscribed to by Britain, the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A.; and certainly nobody will be able to object to its points. It is, maybe, incomplete and vague, but nevertheless it drives home the point that the world is one single unit; that peace is indivisible, that raw materials should be equally accessible to all nations, that people should have equal rights regardless of race, creed or language. The Atlantic Charter could serve as the framework of an ideological platform on which all nations could meet in order to co-ordinate their propaganda. If DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER is pointing out that more films about strategy, etc., are necessary, certainly it will advocate the production of films about the *object of this strategy*.

The enlarging of the line of British film propa-

ganda would certainly have a great effect not only overseas, but also in this country. It would show to the multi-national millions of the Americas that Britain stands for much more than just the British Empire, that the word "Allies" is not just a common denominator of yesterday's politicians in Sunday dress. British documentary has stirred the world by showing the face of Britain. But why not show also the face of Poland, of Holland, of Czechoslovakia? Maybe some will think that it cannot be done, as cameramen sent there wouldn't return before the end of the war; but how many scenes of *Men of the Lightship*, *Target for Tonight*, or even more "realistic" documentaries were unstaged? If it is permitted to reconstruct a raid on Germany, why should it be heresy to reconstruct guerrillas in Serbia? (I do not mean films like *Guests of Honour* or other films of Allied armies here, nor the false anti-Nazism of Hollywood-made features.) Peoples of this island, of the Dominions, of the U.S.A. would be stirred to greater efforts in the field of industrial production and elsewhere if they saw true stories of the multitude of nations which have forgotten the enmities of yesterday, and now stand side by side. Have we not seen the British people redoubling their efforts when they were told that they were supplying the needs of our Soviet ally?

If agreed on the point that films about the Allied peoples are desirable, we come to the question of their production. Such films could be shot only as a result of collaboration between the British (who know the public and the market) and the nationals of this or that country.

There must be a British production management with a multi-national advisory board working in close collaboration during production. (So as to prevent international strife or, worse still, inter-governmental strife, the basis of organisation must be on the principle of parity.) The various Governments have information or propaganda departments spending considerable sums of money on this or that piece of propaganda. As the leading politicians have agreed in principle on co-operation, in theory there should be a basis for such an international film body.

Some of the Allied Governments in Britain already maintain small film units but have had bitter experience in trying to run them independently. As a result some of these Governments have shown signs of a will towards collaboration. Under any scheme of collaboration the most important rôle, of course, would be that of the British body which would take over official sponsorship. Whether or to what extent British funds would be necessary is difficult to judge. Maybe moral support would be enough. Be it the M.O.I., the Crown Film Unit or any other body set up specially to fulfil this purpose, it would have to be co-ordinated into the general lines of British propaganda. Now, after the Atlantic Charter, in theory there can be no obstacles.

Whether or not such an international film unit will come into being, there is no doubt that it would perform many a useful job—for the British people as well as for the peoples of the

world. As nobody has tried it yet, the worst thing which can happen is that this idea will disappear in the giant junk-shop where sleep so many other dreams about international collaboration; but it is now or never. The peoples of the world are stirring, the impact of reality is breaking their sleep. Vaguely their faith in something better is beginning to grow. Documentary films must explain, interpret, enlarge and build up this faith.

They must prove that equality is a real possibility, that privileges of race, class or wealth are unnecessary in a world where machines, running not for profit but for the benefit of all, could produce everything necessary in abundance. We have seen great nations losing their faith and turning murderer out of sheer desperation. We can do something about it with cameras as well as with guns.

CORRESPONDENCE

SIR,

In the article "We Are Waiting" in your November issue it is announced, as something to be deplored, that the Service Film Units are "controlled and staffed by studio technicians." Is this quite fair or quite accurate? From the films made or commissioned by the service film units, those handled by studio technicians are outstandingly better than the others. As for the policy underlying them, this has seemed no worse and no better than that underlying M.O.I. films, all made by and ordered from studio or documentary technicians. Surely the trouble with service films is, not that studio technicians are in charge of them, but that people with no technical qualifications at all are in charge of them.

Examine briefly the service units, of which there are six, three concentrating on training films, and three concentrating on films of public appeal.

Take the three training units first. The army is served by A.K.2. (previously known as M.T.9), still controlled by three officers, of whom you wrote in your issue of December, 1940:—

Responsible for the ordering of production is a Colonel, recently promoted from Major, who, as far as we know, has no experience of film production. . . . Working to the Colonel is a Major, recently promoted from Captain, who was associated with British comedy feature production. Working to the Major is a Captain, recently promoted from Lieutenant, an actor and commentator listed in *The Spotlight* as a "Feature Comedian."

True that one of these is a studio technician, but those that know him say that he is the best of the bunch and tries hard. (In any circumstances he is said to have been a cutter and not a production man.) Since the date of the above quotation there have been some changes, but no alteration in the essential structure of the unit. The three officers have been promoted again to Brigadier, Colonel and Captain respectively. Paul Kimberley has been grafted on to the organisation, but even though he did supervise the production of *Ivanhoe*, the most important film of its time (1912), he is certainly not a studio technician in the modern sense of the word. The *A.C.T. Journal* of March, 1941, said of him that he "has had 30 years in the Film Industry, mostly on the projection side, especially on old time 'fit-ups'." Kimberley replied saying that he had wide knowledge of film distribution.

And not far away is to be found Hughes Roberts, permanent civil servant, Stationery Office official and Government Cinematograph Adviser. He is (or was) in charge of film records of the last war, and this is the only explanation—according to the *Evening News* September last year—for the peculiar situation of a Stationery Office official being an expert on film matters.

Few can disagree with you on the poor quality and ineptness of army training films, and on the incompetence—if nothing worse—which lies behind their production. But don't blame the poor studio technician.

The other two service training film units can be dismissed briefly. The R.A.F. organisation is still in charge of the men who headed it before the war. None of them were studio technicians, but the films used to be of fair quality, though sometimes of deadening prolixity. And the R.A.F. film on meteorology was a masterpiece of its kind. The Naval unit has fairly recently been put in charge of a studio technician of some standing in the film industry. Its films are good, and a coloured diagram film on certain aspects of gunnery tactics is a brilliant piece of exposition.

Turn now to the units responsible for films of public appeal. The best known is the Army Film Unit in charge of Major MacDonald, who was doubtless chosen not because he directed *This Man is News*, but because he directed *Men of the Lightship* under Cavalcanti, a documentary film which received high praise in your issue of September, 1940. You may not feel that the Army Film Unit has been a success, but it is unfair to praise MacDonald as a documentary director in 1940, and to blame him as a studio technician in 1941! And in your last issue, you gave critical praise to the technique of *Special Despatch*, directed by Hugh Stewart, a studio technician.

The work of the Naval public relations unit (if there be such a unit) has not been seen by the public, and you say that the R.A.F. film unit is still in course of being set up, so at least give it the benefit of the doubt till you know who will take charge of it, and the men who will work under him.

Whenever a technician—studio or documentary—has been given his head, the technical qualities of his films have usually been good, and the policy line certainly equal in value to that in M.O.I. films. Give blame where blame is due, and praise where praise is due, but don't pick on the studio technician when you're short of an Aunt Sally.

Yours faithfully,

"4-WAY WINDER"

NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS

(continued from page 229)

two opposing forces is rehearsed in detail. Finally we are shown another parade in the Red Square—but this time a military parade with a seemingly endless stream of men and equipment, marching past Stalin and the other Soviet leaders. *Treatment.* The total impression of the film is one of terrific integrity and boundless strength. It has been re-edited for the British market and the only criticism one can offer on this score is the poor quality of the commentary recording. The commentators themselves are good. Priestley opens and closes with generalised impressions that will obtain a ready concurrence from British audiences. Charlie Garner's cockney witticisms are employed to perfection over the sports sequences, and Major Hooper lends his authoritative experience to describing the Army manoeuvres.

Propaganda value. Although Lord Kemsley was lyrical in his praise of "Soviet brilliance in this vital field of applied moving photography," no one need worry. The film is really tremendous, and its value in cementing the friendship of the Russian and British peoples incalculable. If we in this country can do a job half as well we shall have no cause to grumble.

TECHNICAL EDUCATION IN THE U.S.S.R.

By W. R. STOKER, B.Sc. (Eng.)

Abstracted from *The Engineer*, November 14th, 1941.

THE Moscow Power Institute has made many of its own films which were edited by senior lecturers and produced by a special department of the Institute. There were films on the theory and manufacture of induction motors and transformers. An interesting film dealt with surge phenomena in transformers and showed black and white diagrams of surges travelling along a transmission line and striking a transformer with the resulting reflections and oscillations. The use of surge arresters and Petersen coils were illustrated and the design and construction of Soviet non-resonating transformers was shown. There was even a film on vector algebra and calculus making clear by black and white drawings of vectors and planes, the meaning of potential fields, divergence, vortices, vector potential and the like.

KNITTING FOR TO-NIGHT

Reprinted by courtesy of *Kinematograph Weekly*.

Ministry of Supply instructions for knitting illicit "Target" cross-overs:—

Obtain a supply of steal-wool, pull it over the eyes of an unsuspecting exhibitor. Pick up one positive, cast on one dupe negative, knit two together, and repeat six times. Cast off original and return. Remove wool from subject's eyes, and proceed as before.

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5-MINUTE FILMS FOR NOVEMBER

Title	Theme	Director	Production Unit	Released
W.R.N.S.	Women in the Navy	I. Moffat	Strand	November 3
Special Despatch	Army Despatch Riders	(H. Stewart)	Army Film Unit	November 10
Hospital Nurse	Life in a hospital	F. Searle	G.-B. Screen Services	November 17
Venture, Adventure	Air Cadets	C. Hasse	Crown	November 24



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"ANTI-GAS SUBJECT"**

For the National Savings Committee:

"SAM PEPYS JOINS THE NAVY"

**DIRECTOR OF PRODUCTIONS:—
FRANCIS A. SEARLE**



FILM HOUSE, WARDOUR ST., LONDON, W.1

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THE UNIT BEHIND THIS SYMBOL

PRODUCERS

Donald Taylor

Alexander Shaw
(on loan to the Government of India)

DIRECTORS

Ralph Bond
Jay Lewis

John Eldridge

Michael Gordon
Ivan Moffat

SCENARIO WRITERS

Reg Groves

Dylan Thomas

EDITORS

Alan Osbiston

Betty Orgar

MUSIC DIRECTOR

Muir Mathieson

COMPOSERS

Richard Addinsell

William Alwyn

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